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How Can Saudi Arabia Maximize the Economic Benefits of Hosting Expo 2030?

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Abstract

This paper explores the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia and proposes a comprehensive program aimed at maximizing these benefits. The program focuses on aligning EXPO activities with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, emphasizing economic diversification, infrastructure development, sustainability, tourism, education, and global engagement. The methodology includes an analysis of case studies from previous EXPO hosts to derive lessons and best practices for Saudi Arabia. The proposed program advocates sectoral themes such as technology, sustainability, innovation, promoting investment and international partnerships. Additionally, the program outlines strategies for leveraging EXPO as a platform to showcase the Kingdom's green technologies, smart cities, and cultural heritage, while ensuring long-term benefits through infrastructure development and skills training. The program emphasizes the importance of collaboration between government, private sector entities, and international organizations to create lasting legacies from the event. Finally, the paper highlights the potential for future studies to evaluate the social and economic impacts of EXPO 2030 on Saudi Arabia's workforce, global reputation, and long-term economic transformation.

Keywords: EXPO 2030; Saudi Arabia; Vision 2030; economic diversification; infrastructure development; sustainability; green technologies; tourism, global engagement; skills development; innovation; public-private partnerships.

1. Introduction

Hosting a World EXPO represents a significant opportunity for nations to showcase their cultural, technological, and economic advancements on a global stage. For Saudi Arabia, the upcoming opportunity to host EXPO 2030 offers not only a platform to engage with the world but also a chance to catalyze long-term national development and economic diversification. As the Kingdom advances its ambitious Vision 2030 goals, hosting the EXPO presents a unique chance

to align this international event with broader national objectives, including economic growth, sustainable development, and global positioning.

The economic impact of hosting a World EXPO can be transformative, offering host nations a boost in tourism, investment, and global trade relations. However, maximizing these benefits requires careful planning, strategic decision-making, and a clear roadmap for integrating the event into the nation's broader economic framework. Drawing lessons from previous EXPO host cities, this paper examines the key success factors that contribute to the long-term economic benefits of hosting such an event. Through the analysis of eight detailed case studies from past EXPOs, this study identifies valuable strategies and key lessons that Saudi Arabia can adopt to optimize the economic outcomes of EXPO 2030.

In addition, this paper proposes a tailored strategic program for Saudi Arabia to ensure that the country not only benefits from short-term economic gains but also creates a sustainable growth model that extends well beyond the event itself. By leveraging international partnerships, developing critical infrastructure, and fostering innovation-driven sectors, Saudi Arabia has the potential to transform its economic landscape and elevate its global standing.

The case studies featured in this paper provide insights into the diverse outcomes of previous EXPOs, including their impacts on national economies, infrastructure, tourism, and global engagement. By examining these global experiences, Saudi Arabia can better manage the complexities of hosting EXPO 2030 and maximize the long-term benefits for its economy and global position.

Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to offer evidence-based recommendations that would guide Saudi Arabia's planning and execution of EXPO 2030. By learning from the successes and challenges faced by past EXPO host cities, this study strives to ensure that Saudi Arabia fully capitalizes on the transformative potential of hosting the World EXPO. The strategic program proposed in this paper is designed to generate immediate economic benefits while also creating a lasting legacy that aligns with Vision 2030 and strengthens Saudi Arabia's global standing.

2. Literature Review

The hosting of World Expos has consistently been associated with significant economic, cultural, and infrastructural transformations. This literature review explores the potential economic impact of Saudi Arabia hosting EXPO 2030, particularly in light of the country's Vision 2030 goals. By examining prior EXPO hosts and incorporating the emerging strategic objectives for Saudi Arabia, this review outlines the benefits and challenges associated with this major international event.

2.1. Economic Stimulus and Infrastructure Development

Saudi Arabia's decision to host EXPO 2030 is expected to have a profound impact on the nation's economy. The event is poised to stimulate both short-term and long-term economic growth through massive investments in infrastructure and development projects. The construction of transportation networks, exhibition spaces, and hospitality facilities will create thousands of jobs and generate substantial economic activity. These developments align with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which emphasizes economic diversification and long-term sustainability (Saudi Vision 2030, 2016).

2.1.1. Infrastructure and Urban Development

Large-scale investments in infrastructure will play a central role in EXPO 2030's success. Major developments in airports, public transit, roads, and exhibition facilities are expected, which would enhance connectivity within the kingdom and across the region (Zhang, 2015).

The EXPO site itself will likely catalyze urban renewal efforts, particularly in Riyadh and Jeddah, potentially transforming these cities into global hubs of commerce and culture. Furthermore, the need for upgraded tourism infrastructure, including hotels and other accommodations, will boost the local economy and position Saudi Arabia as a competitive tourist destination post-event (Baker & Norton, 2019).

2.1.2 Job Creation

The job creation potential linked to hosting EXPO 2030 is immense. The construction phase alone will demand skilled labor, while the event itself will generate employment across various sectors, including tourism, hospitality, and event management. Moreover, EXPO will provide opportunities for skill development among the local workforce, contributing to human capital growth in the kingdom and fostering a sustainable labor market (Gürlük *et al.*, 2019).

2.2 Foreign Investment and Business Opportunities

One of the primary strategic objectives for Saudi Arabia is to attract foreign investment and foster international partnerships, and EXPO 2030 provides a unique platform for this. The event will showcase Saudi Arabia's achievements in technology, sustainability, and non-oil sectors, which would facilitate investment opportunities that align with the kingdom's Vision 2030 (Sadiq, 2020).

2.2.1 Promoting Vision 2030

Vision 2030 calls for the diversification of Saudi Arabia's economy, with an emphasis on technology, entertainment, and tourism. Hosting EXPO 2030 will serve as a global stage for Saudi Arabia to highlight its initiatives in these sectors, demonstrating the nation's commitment to innovation and economic transformation (Alkhalifa, 2021). The exposure generated by the event can catalyze international investment in the kingdom's burgeoning non-oil industries, particularly in renewable energy, technology, and sustainable urban development (Alarifi, 2020).

2.2.2 Trade and Tourism

EXPO 2030 will create a dynamic environment for trade and collaboration, drawing international businesses eager to tap into the Middle Eastern market. The influx of visitors will boost the tourism sector, both during the event and in the years that follow. By enhancing the global awareness of Saudi Arabia as a tourist destination and strengthening its tourism infrastructure, EXPO 2030 has the potential to establish long-term growth in this sector (Sivakumar, 2019).

2.3 Cultural Diplomacy and Global Engagement

In addition to economic benefits, hosting EXPO 2030 offers Saudi Arabia a platform to enhance its cultural diplomacy. The event will enable the kingdom to showcase its rich history, culture, and innovations in science and technology, thus contributing to a positive global image and fostering stronger international relationships (Khatib, 2021).

2.3.1 Soft Power and Regional Influence

Successful hosting of EXPO 2030 will bolster Saudi Arabia's soft power, enhancing its influence in the region and beyond. The event will bring together countries from around the world, providing opportunities for cultural exchange and collaborative partnerships. By highlighting the country's leadership in key areas such as sustainability and technological innovation, Saudi Arabia can reshape perceptions globally, reinforcing its status as a regional leader (Schmidt, 2020).

2.3.2 Sustainable Development and Innovation

Sustainability will likely be a central theme of EXPO 2030. Saudi Arabia has been positioning itself as a leader in renewable energy and sustainability, and hosting EXPO 2030 will allow the country to demonstrate its commitment to these values. The event will serve as a showcase for innovative technologies and solutions that promote sustainable development, aligning with global trends toward green technologies and environmentally responsible practices (Gulbrandsen *et al.*, 2021).

2.4 Challenges and Risk Mitigation

While the potential benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 are substantial, there are also several challenges that Saudi Arabia will need to address. These include managing the logistics of hosting a global event, ensuring sustainability in infrastructure development, and minimizing social and environmental impacts.

2.4.1 Financial Risks

Hosting an event of this scale requires significant investment, with risks related to budgeting, financing, and unforeseen costs. It will be critical for Saudi Arabia to manage these financial risks effectively to ensure the long-term sustainability of the event's infrastructure and investments (Davies & Walters, 2019). Mismanagement or overruns could impact the economic benefits derived from the EXPO (Weber, 2020).

2.4.2 Social and Environmental Impact

The rapid development and urbanization associated with EXPO 2030 may lead to challenges such as displacement of local communities, environmental degradation, and resource management issues. The Saudi government will need to balance the need for progress with the imperative of minimizing negative impacts on local populations and the environment. Sustainable development practices will be essential in mitigating these risks and ensuring that EXPO 2030 leaves a positive legacy for future generations (UNEP, 2021).

Saudi Arabia's decision to host EXPO 2030 represents a critical opportunity to drive economic growth, elevate its global standing, and showcase its commitment to innovation and sustainability. Past EXPO hosts have benefited from significant infrastructural development, job creation, and increased global engagement. However, these benefits are contingent on careful planning and management. For Saudi Arabia, EXPO 2030 presents a significant opportunity to advance Vision 2030's goals of economic diversification, infrastructure development, and cultural diplomacy. The long-term benefits will be realized through strategic investments and a focus on sustainability, ensuring that EXPO 2030 leaves a lasting legacy that benefits the kingdom for decades to come.

3. Methodology

The methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of how Saudi Arabia can maximize the economic and infrastructural benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 while also contributing to its Vision 2030 goals. The research methodology consists of two primary components: case study analysis and strategic program development.

The study is structured to integrate insights from case studies to model the potential economic outcomes of hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia. The core research components are Case Study Analysis and Program Development.

The first phase of the methodology involves a comparative analysis of previous EXPO host cities to identify best practices, successes, and challenges. Case studies serve as a core foundation for understanding how hosting an EXPO can influence key economic indicators and long-term development. The selected case studies focus on cities that have hosted EXPOs in the last few decades, with a focus on diverse geographic, economic, and cultural contexts. These cities were selected based on their relevance to Saudi Arabia's hosting ambitions, particularly with regard to infrastructure development, tourism growth, trade expansion, and sustainability. These eight case studies are:

1. **EXPO 1992 Seville (Spain):** This EXPO marked a significant moment in Spain's urban development and global integration, particularly through infrastructure development and cultural diplomacy.
2. **EXPO 2000 Hannover (Germany):** Focusing on the theme of 'Man, Nature, and Technology,' Hannover's EXPO provided valuable insights into how technology can drive economic transformation and global engagement.
3. **EXPO 2005 Aichi (Japan):** Aichi focused on sustainable technologies and environmental development, making it a key example of integrating innovation and sustainability with economic growth.
4. **EXPO 2008 Zaragoza (Spain):** Zaragoza's EXPO provided lessons in regional economic growth, sustainability, and water conservation technologies, influencing Spain's long-term economic trajectory.
5. **EXPO 2010 Shanghai (China):** This EXPO showcased China's rise as an economic powerhouse and served as a model for how infrastructure development and global partnerships can drive national growth.

6. **EXPO 2012 Yeosu (South Korea):** Yeosu's EXPO demonstrated how small-scale EXPOs can still have significant regional economic impacts, with a focus on marine and environmental technologies.
7. **EXPO 2015 Milan (Italy):** Milan's EXPO focused on sustainability and innovation, providing insights into how environmental considerations can shape the economic legacy of the event.
8. **EXPO 2020 Dubai (UAE):** Dubai's EXPO demonstrated the importance of tourism, infrastructure, and cultural diplomacy in enhancing the host nation's global profile.

Each case study was analyzed from multiple perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of its outcomes and implications. From an economic standpoint, the analysis focused on indicators such as GDP growth, job creation, infrastructure investments, and sectoral expansion, particularly in areas like tourism and construction. Social impact was examined through aspects of urban development, enhancements in quality of life, and the degree of community engagement resulting from the initiative. Additionally, global engagement was assessed by evaluating the influence on diplomatic relations, the formation and strengthening of trade partnerships, and the promotion of cultural exchange.

The case study analysis provides valuable lessons for Saudi Arabia's planning process, highlighting both the successes and challenges faced by past EXPO hosts. This forms the basis for designing a strategic program to maximize the benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia.

The second phase of the methodology focuses on program development, which involves designing a tailored strategic model for Saudi Arabia to optimize the economic impact of EXPO 2030. This program was informed by the lessons learned from the case study analysis and aims to ensure that EXPO 2030 contributes to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objectives, including economic diversification, infrastructure development, and global engagement. The key components of the program include:

1. **Strategic Infrastructure Investments:** Based on the findings from the case studies, recommendations were made for key infrastructure projects that align with both the EXPO's goals and the broader objectives of Vision 2030. These could include investments in transportation systems (e.g., high-speed rail, airports), smart city technology, renewable energy, and cultural infrastructure (e.g., museums, exhibition spaces).
2. **Tourism and Hospitality Strategies:** A roadmap was developed for the enhancement of Saudi Arabia's tourism infrastructure, including the development of new hotels, transport systems, and cultural venues. The strategy also includes marketing initiatives aimed at attracting international visitors before, during, and after the event.

3. **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** The program proposes frameworks for fostering collaboration between the government, private sector, and international stakeholders. These partnerships are essential for driving investment, technological innovation, and business development, ensuring the event's financial success and long-term sustainability.
4. **Sustainable Economic Legacies:** A critical aspect of the program is the creation of long-term, sustainable economic benefits that go beyond the duration of the EXPO. Suggestions were made for initiatives that foster local entrepreneurship, create job opportunities, and ensure that EXPO-related infrastructure can be utilized effectively in the future.

The strategic program development provides a comprehensive roadmap for Saudi Arabia, focusing on maximizing both the short-term economic benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 and its long-term contribution to the nation's economic transformation.

The methodology combines case study analysis and strategic program development to assess the potential economic benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia. By examining lessons from previous EXPO hosts (Pezzini, 2014), this research aims to provide actionable recommendations for Saudi Arabia to maximize the event's impact on infrastructure, tourism, trade, and job creation, ultimately aligning with the country's Vision 2030 goals.

4. Case Studies

World EXPOs have been hosted in various countries across the globe, each leaving its own unique impact on the national economy, infrastructure, tourism, and global engagement. These mega-events offer nations the opportunity to showcase technological innovations, foster international collaboration, and stimulate economic growth (Di Vita and Morandi, 2017). As Saudi Arabia plans to potentially host EXPO 2030, aligned with its Vision 2030 goals, examining the experiences of previous EXPO hosts provides invaluable insights into the potential benefits and challenges of hosting such an event.

This section analyzes eight key case studies from past World EXPOs: EXPO 1992 in Seville (Spain), EXPO 2000 in Hannover (Germany), EXPO 2005 in Aichi (Japan), EXPO 2008 in Zaragoza (Spain), EXPO 2010 in Shanghai (China), EXPO 2012 in Yeosu (South Korea), EXPO 2015 in Milan (Italy), and EXPO 2020 in Dubai (UAE). These case studies are instrumental in understanding the economic outcomes, challenges faced, and lasting legacy effects of hosting an EXPO. The insights derived from these case studies offer a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts on infrastructure development, economic growth, tourism, and global engagement—critical factors for Saudi Arabia as it aims to leverage EXPO 2030 for national growth. By evaluating the experiences of past EXPOs, Saudi Arabia can craft a strategic approach

to ensure that hosting EXPO 2030 becomes a transformative opportunity, helping the Kingdom achieve its Vision 2030 objectives while enhancing its global presence.

4.1 Analysis of Previous EXPO Hostings

4.1.1 EXPO 1992 Seville (Spain)

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 1992 in Seville, Spain, was a landmark event held under the theme ‘The Age of Discoveries,’ celebrating Spain’s historical contributions to global exploration. The Spanish government and private sector invested heavily in infrastructure, resulting in significant urban transformation. Seville’s EXPO played a pivotal role in the city’s infrastructure development and integration into global trade networks. Key developments included the construction of new bridges and roads aimed at improving regional and urban connectivity. A significant advancement was the development of a high-speed rail network, notably the AVE train that links Madrid and Seville, enhancing transportation efficiency and accessibility. Another major initiative was the revitalization of the Guadalquivir River waterfront, which successfully integrated modern urban design with Seville’s historical heritage (Martínez & González, 2010). Additionally, the expansion of the airport and the modernization of telecommunications infrastructure played a vital role in supporting business activities and promoting tourism development (Castillo-Manzano, López-Valpuesta, & Marchena-Gómez, 2015).

These investments contributed to regional economic growth and modernization, creating thousands of jobs and boosting Spain’s global economic image. However, some critics argued that financial planning deficiencies led to cost overruns and long-term debt burdens, making it imperative for future hosts to adopt a strategic, sustainable approach to event financing (Martínez & González, 2010).

Tourism and Global Engagement

EXPO 1992 attracted over 41 million visitors, positioning Seville as an international cultural and tourism hub (Díaz-Parra and Jover, 2021). The event promoted Spain’s history and technological advancements in fields like energy and communication. It also fostered diplomatic and commercial relationships, strengthening Spain’s integration into the European Union. Key tourism-related impacts included a substantial increase in both foreign and domestic tourism, which reinforced Seville’s status as a premier cultural destination (Díaz-Parra & Jover, 2021). The city’s global branding was significantly enhanced, positioning Seville as a major hub for cultural heritage and innovation. This was supported by the introduction of iconic architectural landmarks such as the Metropol Parasol and the redesign of public spaces that blended tradition with modernity (Monclús, 2016). Furthermore, the hospitality and service industries experienced notable expansion, yielding long-term economic benefits that extended well beyond the EXPO period. The event also promoted cultural hybridity by integrating local and global influences, crafting a lasting narrative of Seville as a city characterized by discovery and modernity (Quaggio, 2020).

Challenges and Risks

Despite its initial success, EXPO 1992 faced several challenges related to post-event utilization. The EXPO site, once a symbol of progress and innovation, experienced significant underutilization after the event, with many pavilions either abandoned or repurposed in ways that lacked efficiency and long-term vision (Jover & Díaz-Parra, 2020). Additionally, the maintenance of the expansive infrastructure became increasingly costly, raising concerns about financial sustainability as the site struggled to attract consistent business activity and investment (Haro Aragu, García-Mestanza, & Caballero-Galeote, 2021). Moreover, some of the anticipated urban integration projects failed to materialize as planned, limiting the economic returns and emphasizing the critical need for strategic and sustainable post-event planning (Martínez & González, 2010).

EXPO 1992 transformed Seville's economic and urban landscape, showcasing Spain's cultural and technological advancements. However, the challenges in post-event infrastructure use highlight critical lessons for Saudi Arabia as it prepares for EXPO 2030. By focusing on long-term economic integration, sustainability, and tourism, Saudi Arabia can maximize the benefits of hosting the event and solidify its position as a cultural and economic leader in the Middle East.

4.1.2 EXPO 2000 Hannover (Germany)

Hannover's EXPO focused on technology, sustainability, and environmental solutions.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2000 in Hannover, Germany, was the first World EXPO of the new millennium, centered on the theme 'Man, Nature, and Technology.' The event aimed to showcase advancements in sustainable development and ecological responsibility. Substantial investments were made in infrastructure as part of EXPO 2000 in Hannover, with a focus on sustainability and innovation. One of the key developments was the construction of the EXPO site itself, which was specifically designed to showcase green technologies and principles of sustainable urban planning (Kurtz, 2005). In parallel, Hannover's transport systems underwent significant expansion and modernization, including upgrades to the airport, train stations, and public transportation networks, all aimed at enhancing connectivity and accessibility. Additionally, broader urban regeneration efforts were implemented to integrate sustainability into the city's long-term planning framework, reinforcing Hannover's commitment to environmentally conscious development (Aelbrecht, 2019).

Despite these investments, the anticipated long-term economic benefits were lower than expected. The event failed to attract the projected number of visitors, resulting in financial losses and limiting the overall return on investment (Kurtz, 2005). While Hannover's transportation

infrastructure remains a lasting legacy, the financial burden of the event raised concerns about the sustainability of large-scale investments in EXPOs without a clear post-event utilization strategy.

Tourism and Global Engagement

EXPO 2000 attracted approximately 18 million visitors – far fewer than initially projected. Germany leveraged the event to position itself as a leader in green technologies and sustainable urban development. However, the EXPO did not generate the anticipated tourism boost, highlighting challenges in maintaining international engagement post-event (Kurtz, 2005). Key tourism-related impacts of EXPO 2000 included the successful showcasing of Germany's commitment to sustainability, which played a pivotal role in influencing global discourse on environmental responsibility. The event also served as a platform for strengthening international collaboration through thematic exhibits centered on ecological innovation, fostering dialogue among nations on sustainable practices. In an effort to ensure long-term utility, the creation of EXPO Park aimed to repurpose the site for continued business and tourism use; however, it struggled to attract substantial activity or investment (Panwar, Chopra, & Haddad, 2025). Despite these challenges, EXPO 2000 left a lasting legacy by shaping the direction of future world exhibitions, particularly in emphasizing the importance of global cooperation in sustainable development.

Challenges and Risks

EXPO 2000 faced significant challenges related to financial sustainability and the effective utilization of its infrastructure after the event. One of the primary issues was lower-than-expected attendance, which resulted in substantial financial losses and raised critical questions about the viability of hosting such large-scale events without strong engagement from the private sector (Kurtz, 2005). Efforts to repurpose the EXPO site also encountered difficulties, as Expo Park failed to attract long-term investment and remained largely underutilized (Aelbrecht, 2019). While the event's strong emphasis on sustainability was visionary, it lacked immediate commercial appeal, which contributed to slower economic returns. Additionally, the high maintenance costs associated with the green infrastructure imposed further financial burdens, complicating efforts to achieve long-term viability.

EXPO 2000 in Hannover showcased sustainability and technological advancements but faced challenges in visitor engagement and economic return. Its legacy in green technology remains influential, but financial difficulties and underutilized infrastructure offer critical lessons for Saudi Arabia. By strategically planning EXPO 2030's infrastructure, tourism, and sustainability initiatives, Saudi Arabia can maximize long-term economic and social benefits, ensuring a lasting impact beyond the event.

4.1.3 EXPO 2005 Aichi (Japan)

Aichi's EXPO was centered around the themes of sustainable development, environmental technologies, and technological innovation.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2005 in Aichi, Japan, centered on the theme of 'Nature's Wisdom' and focused on environmental sustainability and technological innovation. The Japanese government and private sector invested significantly in the EXPO's infrastructure, which included the development of the Aichi EXPO site, new public transportation systems, and the promotion of green technologies (Bureau of International Expositions, 2005). The event was held in a region that was already highly industrialized, and the EXPO aimed to drive innovation in environmental sustainability and energy-efficient technologies (Yoshimoto, 2006).

Tourism and Global Engagement

Aichi's EXPO attracted approximately 22 million visitors, including a notable number of international tourists. The event helped boost the local economy by increasing demand for hotels, restaurants, and transportation services (Japan Association for the 2005 World Exposition, 2006). It also facilitated global engagement in areas such as renewable energy, environmental conservation, and sustainable urban planning. Japan used the EXPO to showcase its leadership in green technology and sustainability practices, enhancing its global standing and fostering international collaboration on environmental issues (Sasaki, 2010).

Challenges and Risks

EXPO 2005 was marred by financial concerns, as the event did not achieve the level of profitability that was initially anticipated. While the EXPO contributed to the development of new green technologies, the post-event impact on local economic growth was more modest than expected. One of the major challenges faced was the underutilization of some of the EXPO's infrastructure, with reports indicating that many of the EXPO's buildings were not used efficiently post-event (Sasaki, 2010). However, the event succeeded in highlighting Japan's efforts in environmental conservation and sustainable urban development.

4.1.4 EXPO 2008 Zaragoza (Spain)

Zaragoza's EXPO focused on water conservation and sustainability in the face of climate change.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2008 in Zaragoza, Spain, focused on the theme 'Water and Sustainable Development' (Garcia & Ramirez, 2011b). The event generated significant investments in urban infrastructure, such as the creation of new public spaces, transportation networks, and water management systems. Zaragoza's economic growth was bolstered by the development of these infrastructure projects, as well as a rise in tourism during the event (Garcia & Ramirez, 2011a). Economic impact assessments suggest that the EXPO contributed to local GDP growth, particularly in the sectors of construction, tourism, and services (Monclús, 2017).

Tourism and Global Engagement

The EXPO attracted over 6 million visitors, with a strong focus on sustainability. Spain used the event to position itself as a leader in water management and environmental technology (Garcia & Ramirez, 2011b). Although tourism numbers were significant, the event had limited long-term impact outside Zaragoza, with tourism tapering off after the event (Garcia & Ramirez, 2011).

Challenges and Risks

Despite the temporary economic gains, the post-event impact on Zaragoza was mixed. The city struggled to sustain the momentum of tourism and infrastructure development after the EXPO concluded. One of the key challenges was the underutilization of some of the EXPO's facilities, which were not integrated into the city's long-term development strategy (Garcia & Ramirez, 2011).

4.1.5 EXPO 2010 Shanghai (China)

This EXPO marked China's rise as a global economic power and provided an opportunity to showcase its commitment to sustainable urban development and innovation.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2010 in Shanghai was one of the most ambitious and large-scale EXPOs in history, with more than \$45 billion in investments, including the construction of new infrastructure and public amenities. Shanghai's infrastructure improvements included the creation of the world's largest urban metro network at the time, extensive upgrades to public transportation systems, and the construction of the iconic EXPO site along the Huangpu River (Xu & Chen, 2012a). The event

was seen as a catalyst for urbanization in Shanghai and other cities across China, showcasing China's growing technological prowess and economic might (Li, 2012; Li, *et al.*, 2014).

The EXPO contributed significantly to Shanghai's real estate and construction boom, as the city continued to develop rapidly after the event. EXPO 2010 was a key part of China's strategy to boost its global economic standing by attracting foreign businesses and investors to the region (Deng, Poon, & Chan, 2016). It also served as a major tool for modernizing China's urban landscape, with a strong focus on sustainability and technological advancements (Lin & Xu, 2019).

Tourism and Global Engagement

The EXPO significantly boosted Shanghai's tourism, attracting over 73 million visitors, including a large number of international tourists. It gave China an opportunity to present its development story to the world, highlighting its achievements in modernizing its infrastructure, economy, and technological innovation. The EXPO helped strengthen China's global soft power and fostered diplomatic relations with numerous countries through cultural exchange and collaboration in various areas, including education, environmental sustainability, and urban development.

The 'Better City, Better Life' theme allowed China to showcase its commitment to sustainability and urban innovation. It was an opportunity to display cutting-edge design, environmental integration, and smart planning of cities, provoking discussions on urban sustainability (Wong, 2014). EXPO 2010 also served as a platform for cultural diplomacy, blending traditional and modern elements to promote a sense of cosmopolitanism, local pride, and a new social identity among Shanghai residents (Guo, Kim, & Chen, 2014).

Challenges and Risks

The large-scale infrastructure development came with significant financial risks, and concerns about the long-term sustainability of EXPO-related investments were raised. The cost of maintaining some of the large exhibition pavilions post-event was also a challenge. While the EXPO's infrastructural upgrades provided lasting benefits for Shanghai's development, experts have noted that the city needed to carefully manage the post-event use of the site to avoid 'white elephant' projects (Xu & Chen, 2012).

Despite the initial success, the challenge of sustaining the momentum post-event highlighted the necessity of effective post-EXPO planning to integrate EXPO infrastructure into long-term city development (Chinellato, 2019). The exhibition's legacy continues to resonate through Shanghai's urban planning and its positioning as a global economic and cultural hub.

4.1.6 EXPO 2012 Yeosu (South Korea)

Yeosu's EXPO focused on the oceans, marine resources, and sustainable development.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2012 Yeosu, themed 'The Living Ocean and Coast,' aimed to promote marine sustainability and raise awareness about environmental issues. The event led to significant investments in infrastructure, including waterfront developments, transportation networks, and environmental improvements. The city's economy received a boost from increased domestic and international visitors, along with heightened attention to Yeosu's port and marine industries (Kim & Han, 2014).

The EXPO also stimulated local economic growth, particularly in sectors related to tourism, marine conservation, and environmental technology. However, the city faced challenges in ensuring that these investments translated into long-term economic benefits. Yeosu's post-EXPO financial recovery was complicated by a lack of a clear strategy for utilizing the EXPO site and the challenge of generating sustained tourism interest post-event (Kim & Han, 2014a; Son, 2018).

Tourism and Global Engagement

The EXPO attracted over 8 million visitors, primarily focusing on environmental sustainability. While the event raised South Korea's global profile in the field of marine conservation and sustainability, its tourism impact was less significant than that of larger EXPOs. Yeosu's engagement with the global community was largely centered on environmental diplomacy, with countries participating to share technologies related to marine conservation (Kim & Han, 2014).

Additionally, the event fostered cultural exchange and raised global awareness of marine issues, creating lasting emotional connections between participants through its thematic focus on sustainability. Yeosu became an important hub for discourse on environmental challenges and global cooperation in marine conservation (Ambrosini, 2020).

Challenges and Risks

Yeosu faced several challenges in maximizing the long-term benefits of hosting the EXPO. The lack of a clear post-event utilization plan for the EXPO site led to difficulties in maintaining economic activity and attracting sustained investments. While the event succeeded in generating short-term tourism interest and global awareness, it failed to build a long-lasting tourism infrastructure or global branding comparable to other EXPO host cities.

Financial challenges also plagued the event, as Yeosu struggled to recover its investment costs. The theme of ‘Living Oceans and Coast,’ though important, did not generate the global excitement that some anticipated, resulting in less international attention than hoped. These challenges illustrate the need for careful planning to ensure long-term economic sustainability and effective post-event use of EXPO sites.

4.1.7 EXPO 2015 Milan (Italy)

Milan’s EXPO focused on sustainability and food security, drawing global attention to issues surrounding the future of food and nutrition.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2015 Milan, centered around the theme ‘Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life,’ focused on global issues such as food security, sustainability, and resource management. The event led to substantial investments in infrastructure, including the development of the EXPO site in Rho, new transportation infrastructure (such as metro stations and road improvements), and significant upgrades to public services (Di Vita *et al.*, 2017). Milan’s total economic investments were estimated at over €1 billion, with expectations of substantial returns through increased tourism, business, and international attention.

The event’s infrastructure investments significantly enhanced Milan’s urban landscape, though the long-term economic benefits fell short of initial projections. While tourism numbers surged, the economic return was not as high as anticipated. The EXPO’s focus on food security and sustainability drew substantial global attention, resulting in foreign investment, particularly in green technologies and the food industry (Brusati & Spini, 2016; Ricci & Banterle, 2018).

Tourism and Global Engagement

The EXPO attracted over 22 million visitors and enhanced Milan’s reputation as a hub for innovation, especially in sustainable agriculture and food technologies. Italy successfully utilized its soft power to promote ‘Made in Italy’ products and technologies, leveraging global partnerships and business exchanges, especially in the food, agriculture, and sustainability sectors.

While Milan experienced a substantial tourism boost, the event’s impact on the surrounding region was less pronounced due to its confinement to the city. Nonetheless, the global exposure helped solidify Italy’s role as a leader in food systems and sustainability practices (Brusati & Spini, 2016). The EXPO also had a cultural influence, shaping international perceptions of Italy’s commitment to sustainability and its rich food heritage (Di Vita *et al.*, 2017).

Challenges and Risks

Despite the large influx of visitors and investments, Milan faced challenges in realizing the full economic potential of EXPO 2015. The event's economic return was less than initially projected, and the city struggled with the underutilization of some pavilions post-event (Brusati & Spini, 2016). The EXPO site's future use became a concern, with Milan facing difficulties in repurposing the infrastructure to ensure continued economic activity and tourism interest after the event.

Additionally, concerns over the seasonality of tourism and the sustainability of the infrastructure investments emerged. The event's economic benefits were not as evenly distributed across the region, and the lack of a clear post-event strategy for some facilities led to underutilization. Milan's experience serves as a reminder of the risks associated with mega-events and the need for careful planning regarding infrastructure and long-term use.

4.1.8 EXPO 2020 Dubai (UAE)

Dubai's EXPO showcased the UAE's ambitions as a global hub for tourism, innovation, and cross-cultural exchange.

Economic and Infrastructure Impact

EXPO 2020 Dubai, initially scheduled for 2020 but delayed to 2021-2022 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, was an ambitious event aimed at diversifying the UAE's economy, enhancing global competitiveness, and showcasing technological advancements. The event represented an estimated investment of \$7 billion, making it one of the most expensive EXPOs in history (UAE National, 2021).

Key infrastructure developments included the creation of EXPO Village (a mixed-use area comprising housing, hotels, and commercial spaces), the expansion of Al Maktoum International Airport, and the construction of a new metro line directly connecting the EXPO site to the rest of Dubai (Mansour & Al-Mansoori, 2021a). The event's infrastructure investments have had a lasting impact on Dubai's urban landscape, with projects designed to cater to the EXPO and continue to benefit the city post-event (Al-Shihabi *et al.*, 2023).

The total investment was expected to result in substantial returns, both during and after the event. These investments were projected to boost the tourism and real estate sectors significantly, contributing to the UAE's broader economic diversification strategy. However, the financial burden of constructing such large-scale infrastructure in a short timeframe posed risks, especially in the context of a global pandemic.

Tourism and Global Engagement

Dubai's tourism sector was greatly impacted by EXPO 2020, with projections estimating that the event would attract around 25 million visitors (Dubai EXPO 2020, 2020). The EXPO served as a platform for promoting Dubai as a global destination for business, culture, and tourism. It enhanced the UAE's image as a forward-thinking nation committed to innovation, sustainability, and progress, drawing international attention and fostering cross-border business partnerships.

The EXPO was a key driver for promoting cultural exchanges and diplomatic ties, enabling the UAE to strengthen its relationships with other nations. In addition to tourism, the event played a significant role in bolstering the UAE's soft power, with the EXPO highlighting its leadership in areas such as sustainability, mobility, and opportunity. Dubai used the EXPO to showcase groundbreaking technologies in these sectors, further establishing itself as a global business hub and attracting international investment in emerging industries (Alagarsamy & Ramdas, 2024).

Challenges and Risks

Despite its many successes, EXPO 2020 Dubai faced several challenges. One of the most significant was the financial burden associated with constructing infrastructure in a relatively short period. Additionally, the pandemic delay meant that the event did not achieve its projected attendance figures in the original timeframe, though it still garnered significant international attention.

A major risk associated with hosting EXPO 2020 was the potential for underutilization of the site post-event. To mitigate this, Dubai focused on transforming the EXPO site into District 2020, a sustainable smart city that would continue to host businesses, educational institutions, and residential areas, ensuring the long-term economic activity stemming from EXPO-related infrastructure (Mansour & Al-Mansoori, 2021b). This strategic planning aimed to prevent the EXPO site from becoming an underused legacy, a challenge faced by many previous EXPOs (Nadkarni & Teele, 2019; Omar & Azhari, 2021; Tudor, 2022).

Impact Assessment of Previous EXPOs

Each World EXPO has left a profound mark on its host country, influencing economic growth, social development, and international relations. By examining the outcomes of past EXPOs, valuable insights emerge on how these events contribute to national progress and global positioning. The impact of each EXPO can be analyzed across three key dimensions as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 :A summary of the economic, social, and global impacts of past EXPOs,

EXPO	Economic Impact	Social Impact	Global Engagement
EXPO 1992 Seville (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosted Spain's GDP • Created jobs • Improved infrastructure (high-speed rail, airport) • Increased tourism and construction growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformed the Expo site into a cultural and recreational hub, improving quality of life. • Encouraged community engagement in cultural exchanges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened diplomatic ties and trade partnerships. • Enhanced Spain's global cultural profile.
EXPO 2000 Hannover (Germany)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulated local economic growth through infrastructure investments, trade partnerships, and business ventures in technology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redeveloped the Expo site into a business and cultural district. • Engaged local communities in sustainability projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioned Germany as a leader in environmental technologies. • Strengthened diplomatic ties through global discussions.
EXPO 2005 Aichi (Japan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led to major infrastructure investments in transport and eco-friendly buildings. • Boosted employment and investments in green technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted sustainability and urban revitalization. • Increased public awareness of environmental issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Japan's diplomatic standing in sustainability and innovation. • Fostered international partnerships in green technology.
EXPO 2008 Zaragoza (Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drove investment in water management infrastructure, leading to sectoral growth in research and environmental sciences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved urban infrastructure and water conservation efforts. • Raised awareness of water scarcity issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated collaborations on water conservation and climate change. • Reinforced Spain's leadership in environmental solutions.
EXPO 2010 Shanghai (China)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massive investments in infrastructure (subways, highways). • Boosted GDP and job creation in tourism, construction, and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led to urban development and community engagement through cultural and educational initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevated China's global status, expanding trade and diplomatic ties. • Promoted sustainability and urban innovation.
EXPO 2012 Yeosu (South Korea)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on regional economic growth with investments in waterfront development, boosting tourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised awareness of marine conservation. • Transformed waterfront areas into cultural and recreational spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioned South Korea as a leader in marine sustainability. • Strengthened global partnerships on environmental issues.
EXPO 2015 Milan (Italy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant infrastructure and tourism investments. • Generated jobs in construction, hospitality, and retail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalized public spaces and enhanced urban quality of life. • Promoted awareness of sustainable food production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Italy's global influence in food security and sustainability. • Expanded trade partnerships in agriculture and sustainability sectors.
EXPO 2020 Dubai (UAE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated economic benefits in tourism, construction, and hospitality. • Drove major infrastructure projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformed Dubai's urban landscape with new cultural and commercial spaces. • Engaged local communities through events and workforce programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced Dubai's position as a global business hub. • Fostered trade, tourism, and sustainability initiatives.

4.2. Maximizing the Economic Benefits of Hosting EXPO for Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has set an ambitious roadmap to transform its economy, moving away from dependence on oil and positioning itself as a global hub for innovation, tourism, and sustainable development. Hosting the World EXPO presents a unique opportunity for Saudi Arabia to achieve these objectives while drawing on lessons learned from previous EXPOs worldwide. By examining the experiences of cities such as Dubai, Shanghai, Milan, Yeosu, Zaragoza, and others, Saudi Arabia can devise a comprehensive plan to ensure that hosting the EXPO maximizes the economic, social, and cultural benefits. This section discusses how Saudi Arabia can leverage these lessons, identify potential risks, and propose a strategic plan to ensure the long-term success of EXPO.

Economic Diversification

One of the primary objectives of hosting an EXPO is to accelerate economic diversification, a core goal of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Dubai's EXPO 2020, for example, succeeded in attracting foreign investments and boosting non-oil sectors like tourism, technology, and entertainment. By hosting the event, Dubai positioned itself as a global hub for innovation, with a clear strategy to use the EXPO to showcase its evolving economy. Saudi Arabia can replicate this strategy by aligning the EXPO with its Vision 2030 focus on sectors such as renewable energy, tourism, technology, and entertainment.

The Kingdom should target its non-oil sectors to demonstrate the potential for growth, inviting international companies and investors to collaborate, while promoting its rich cultural heritage and historical significance. A focus on cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence, smart cities, and green energy would align the EXPO's theme with the country's modernization efforts. Saudi Arabia could also learn from Milan's approach of showcasing its expertise in food technology and sustainability, emphasizing Saudi Arabia's investments in clean energy and environmental initiatives.

Infrastructure and Urban Development

The infrastructure investment associated with hosting an EXPO is significant, as observed in past events like Shanghai 2010 and Aichi 2005. These EXPOs resulted in long-term economic benefits due to the development of public transport systems, sustainable building practices, and large-scale urban renewal projects. Dubai's EXPO 2020 also demonstrated that investing in infrastructure can leave a legacy of long-term urban development, such as the creation of District 2020, a smart city aimed at housing businesses, schools, and residential communities (Moggi, *et al.*, 2024).

Saudi Arabia should consider aligning the EXPO site with its broader urban development plans, especially in cities like Riyadh or Jeddah, where infrastructure development is key to accommodating the country's expanding population and growing economic activity. Investment in transportation networks (e.g., metro systems, high-speed rail), renewable energy infrastructure (solar power, wind farms), and public spaces can contribute to the legacy of the EXPO and offer lasting benefits to the economy.

Tourism and Cultural Diplomacy

Tourism is a critical driver of economic growth, and EXPOs have historically provided a significant boost to host countries' tourism industries. As shown in Seville 1992, the EXPO can attract millions of visitors, generating substantial short-term revenue from tourism-related activities. Shanghai and Milan's EXPOs also highlighted the role of cultural diplomacy in positioning the host city as a destination for international tourists and business travelers. Saudi Arabia can build upon its rich cultural heritage, including its ancient history, Islamic sites, and contemporary artistic developments, to attract global visitors. By promoting a thematic focus on its cultural heritage and futuristic visions of urban living, Saudi Arabia can enhance its international tourism profile. Additionally, the EXPO could be an opportunity to introduce global tourists to Saudi Arabia's ambitious plans in sustainable development, technological innovation, and modern cultural exchange, as exemplified in EXPO 2020 Dubai's thematic focus on sustainability and connectivity.

Sustainability and Environmental Innovation

Hosting an EXPO can also highlight a country's commitment to sustainability, as shown by EXPOs such as Yeosu (2012), which focused on marine sustainability, and Zaragoza (2008), which emphasized water management. These EXPOs not only attracted global attention to pressing environmental issues but also created opportunities to showcase local green innovations and technologies. Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a leader in environmental sustainability with initiatives like the Saudi Green Initiative and the Neom megacity project. The EXPO can serve as a platform to highlight these initiatives on a global scale. Hosting a sustainability-focused EXPO would allow Saudi Arabia to showcase its efforts in renewable energy, water conservation, and green technologies, aligning with its Vision 2030 goals. Key sectors to highlight would include solar energy (with the country being one of the largest producers of solar power), sustainable urban planning (especially in projects like NEOM), and water management.

Table 2 below summarizes the key lessons for Saudi Arabia from the eight EXPO case studies to ensure a comprehensive understanding for the country's preparation for EXPO 2030.

Table 2: Key lessons for Saudi Arabia from the EXPO case studies

Key Area	Lesson for Saudi Arabia	Elaboration
Infrastructure Integration and Legacy	Develop multifunctional, sustainable infrastructure: Saudi Arabia should focus on creating EXPO-related infrastructure that can be repurposed post-event, ensuring long-term utility. Projects should include residential, business, and public service facilities to guarantee continuous activity after EXPO 2030.	The development of District 2020 post-EXPO in Dubai demonstrates the importance of repurposing infrastructure for long-term use (Mansour & Al-Mansoori, 2021a). Saudi Arabia can integrate this into their EXPO 2030 planning, ensuring that the legacy infrastructure can drive economic and social growth beyond the event.
Post-Event Utilization	Plan for effective post-event utilization of EXPO infrastructure: Saudi Arabia should ensure the infrastructure created for EXPO 2030 serves long-term goals, such as transforming the EXPO site into a smart city or business hub to maintain continued economic activity post-event.	Dubai's planning for the long-term use of the Expo 2020 site is a model for Saudi Arabia. By transforming the EXPO site into a smart city, District 2020, Dubai ensures that investments continue to generate economic and social returns (Mansour & Al-Mansoori, 2021b). Saudi Arabia should integrate such forward-thinking plans into its EXPO 2030 legacy.
Tourism and Global Branding	Develop tourism infrastructure and promote global branding: Saudi Arabia should strategically invest in tourism infrastructure, focusing on hotels, transportation, and facilities that attract both international and domestic visitors. The event can significantly boost the global perception of the country.	Milan capitalized on global branding by enhancing tourism infrastructure and showcasing its global presence (Sainaghi & Mauri, 2018a,b,c). Saudi Arabia can position EXPO 2030 as a major cultural, business, and tourism hub, attracting international visitors and promoting its Vision 2030 goals of diversification and sustainability.
Sustainability and Technological Innovation	Align EXPO 2030 with sustainability and innovation: Saudi Arabia should align the theme of EXPO 2030 with sustainability, technology, and renewable energy, which resonate with the country's Vision 2030 goals. Showcasing advancements in these fields can enhance the global image of Saudi Arabia as a leader in innovation.	Milan EXPO's focus on sustainability and food security created lasting conversations about ecological practices (Guizzardi, Mariani & Prayag, 2017a,b). Saudi Arabia can similarly showcase its advancements in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and the NEOM project, positioning itself as a global leader in sustainability and technological innovation.
Cultural Diplomacy and Global Engagement	<p>Use EXPO 2030 as a platform for cultural diplomacy: Saudi Arabia can leverage EXPO 2030 as a venue for cultural exchange and diplomacy, increasing the country's soft power on the global stage by showcasing Saudi heritage, arts, and innovations.</p> <p>Create opportunities for international collaboration: Saudi Arabia can use EXPO 2030 as a global platform to foster partnerships in technology, sustainability, and business, aligning with Vision 2030's international cooperation goals.</p>	EXPO 2020 Dubai increased the UAE's global soft power by hosting cultural events and building international relationships (Engelland-Gay, 2023). Saudi Arabia can similarly use EXPO 2030 to enhance its diplomatic relations and showcase the country's rich culture and history, reinforcing its role as a regional and global leader. Shanghai used EXPO 2010 to strengthen international partnerships and attract foreign expertise (Zhang & Wei, 2013). Saudi Arabia can follow this model to enhance its international standing and foster collaborations that support its long-term goals in innovation, sustainability, and diversification.

Economic Diversification	Focus on economic diversification through international partnerships: Saudi Arabia should leverage EXPO 2030 to encourage foreign investments, especially in sectors like technology, renewable energy, and tourism, contributing to the country's efforts to diversify its economy beyond oil.	EXPO 2010 Shanghai led to a surge in foreign investments, especially in green technologies and sustainable industries (Wang & Wei, 2011). Saudi Arabia should follow this strategy, promoting collaboration with international companies to accelerate its economic diversification and reduce reliance on oil, in line with Vision 2030.
Community Engagement and Social Impact	Engage local communities in EXPO 2030 preparations: Involving local communities in the planning, execution, and post-event use of EXPO 2030 infrastructure can ensure that the benefits of hosting the event reach the broader population.	Shanghai's success in community engagement resulted in the long-term social benefits of EXPO 2010, as local communities benefited from the new infrastructure and economic activities (Zhang & Wei, 2013). Saudi Arabia should ensure that EXPO 2030 brings tangible benefits to its population, particularly in terms of education, job creation, and social services.
Financial Planning and Risk Management	Ensure careful financial planning and risk management: Saudi Arabia must prioritize financial planning and risk management to mitigate the potential financial risks of hosting EXPO 2030. A well-thought-out investment strategy will help avoid post-event financial challenges.	Yeosu faced financial difficulties due to insufficient post-event planning and underutilization of the EXPO site (Kim & Han, 2014b,c). Saudi Arabia must ensure that EXPO 2030 investments are not only profitable during the event but also generate long-term economic value. This requires strategic planning and a clear post-event strategy for infrastructure utilization.
Innovation and Research Collaboration	Encourage innovation and technological partnerships: EXPO 2030 should showcase Saudi Arabia's innovations in energy, technology, and sustainable practices, acting as a catalyst for research partnerships and collaborations.	Milan's EXPO helped spur new technological advancements and business collaborations (Alagarsamy & Ramdas, 2024). Saudi Arabia should use EXPO 2030 as a platform for attracting research partnerships, particularly in the fields of renewable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and technological solutions that align with Vision 2030.
Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Focus on sustainability as a core theme: EXPO 2030 must prioritize sustainable solutions in every aspect, from infrastructure development to event operations, ensuring that the event leaves a positive environmental legacy.	Sustainability was a core theme of EXPO 2020 Dubai, with emphasis on environmental technologies (Al-Shihabi et al., 2023a). Saudi Arabia can use EXPO 2030 to showcase the country's commitment to sustainability, both through technological innovations and operational practices that minimize environmental impact.

The case studies above offer valuable insights into the multifaceted impacts of hosting a World EXPO, encompassing economic growth, infrastructure development, and global engagement. These experiences provide essential lessons that can guide Saudi Arabia's preparation for EXPO 2030. By focusing on key areas such as infrastructure, tourism, global visibility, and sustainability, Saudi Arabia can maximize the long-term benefits of hosting this global event, aligning with its Vision 2030 goals and positioning the Kingdom as a global leader in the post-oil era. The analysis of these case studies enhances the understanding of the complex dynamics at play when hosting an EXPO. The valuable lessons gleaned from these examples will

help shape Saudi Arabia's approach to hosting EXPO 2030, ensuring that the event is not only a momentous occasion but also a catalyst for long-term growth and international prominence.

Through the lens of these case studies, it becomes evident that EXPO 2030 presents a unique opportunity for Saudi Arabia. By leveraging the event to promote its Vision 2030 initiatives, making strategic investments in infrastructure, attracting foreign investment, and fostering cultural diplomacy, the Kingdom can achieve substantial national growth and bolster its global standing. However, as these case studies demonstrate, careful planning, risk mitigation, and post-event strategies are crucial to ensuring that the benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 extend far beyond the event itself. Hence, this study suggests a strategic program that will enable Saudi Arabia to integrate all the key lessons from these case studies, ensuring that the Kingdom derives the maximum benefit from hosting EXPO 2030. With the right approach, Saudi Arabia can turn EXPO 2030 into a transformative milestone in its journey toward economic diversification and global engagement.

5. A Proposed Program for Saudi Arabia to Maximize the Benefits of Hosting EXPO

To ensure the successful economic, social, and environmental outcomes of hosting the World EXPO, Saudi Arabia can adopt a comprehensive, multi-phase program that leverages both government and non-governmental institutions (NGOs), businesses, and international stakeholders. The program is designed to maximize the immediate economic impact and create long-lasting benefits in alignment with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The program, as outlined below, emphasizes cross-sector collaboration, long-term infrastructure development, sustainability, and global engagement.

1. Driving Economic Diversification and Innovation

Sectoral Focus: Diversification Beyond Oil

Saudi Arabia aims to shift from a reliance on oil to a diversified economy, with priorities on technology, tourism, entertainment, green energy, and finance. The EXPO provides a platform for showcasing innovation in these sectors. The program aligns the EXPO's theme and activities with the Vision 2030 goals by creating opportunities for global partnerships, investment, and knowledge exchange.

Execution Steps

- **Establish EXPO Sectoral Themes:** The EXPO could focus on themes such as “*Future Cities*,” “*Sustainability*,” and “*Technology for the Future*,” which resonate with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 sectors: clean energy, smart cities, digital transformation, and tourism.
- **Promote Investment Opportunities:** Develop an international marketing campaign in collaboration with the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in non-oil industries. Focus on tech startups, green energy, and entertainment hubs.
- **Partnerships with Global Corporations:** Partner with multinational corporations (e.g., tech companies, renewable energy firms) to set up pavilions showcasing cutting-edge innovations. Create a platform for international businesses to explore opportunities in Saudi Arabia's emerging sectors.

2. Infrastructure Development: Smart Cities and Sustainable Infrastructure

Execution Steps

- **Repurpose the EXPO Site for Long-Term Use:** Establish a long-term development plan for the EXPO site to ensure its transformation into a smart city or a commercial hub after the event. Similar to how Dubai’s EXPO 2020 site became District 2020, Saudi Arabia should designate parts of the EXPO infrastructure to become hubs for businesses, universities, or innovation centers.
- **Smart City Design:** Work with architectural firms and urban planning experts to design a site that integrates cutting-edge technologies like smart buildings, autonomous transport systems, and renewable energy.
- **Transport Infrastructure:** Leverage the EXPO to develop a comprehensive transportation network, including metro systems, high-speed rail connections, and green transport (e.g., electric vehicle charging stations).
- **Collaborative Infrastructure Funding:** Seek public-private partnerships (PPP) for infrastructure funding. The government can provide land, and private companies can contribute to design and development.

3. Tourism and Global Engagement

Saudi Arabia is making strides in developing its tourism sector, with the introduction of new attractions, heritage sites, and entertainment projects. Hosting the EXPO provides an opportunity to accelerate this growth by highlighting Saudi Arabia's cultural richness and modern developments. The program must include a comprehensive tourism strategy to attract both global visitors and investment in hospitality infrastructure.

Execution Steps

- **Tourism Campaign:** Launch a global tourism campaign showcasing the Kingdom's rich cultural heritage (e.g., Al-Ula, Makkah, Riyadh's historical sites) alongside new developments like NEOM, Qiddiya, and the Red Sea Project. Leverage EXPO visitors as a gateway to longer stays.
- **Expo Visitor Experience:** Focus on creating a world-class visitor experience, from the EXPO site to nearby tourist destinations. This includes developing high-quality transport options, hotels, and entertainment hubs.
- **Cultural Programs:** Partner with cultural organizations to host events that celebrate Saudi Arabia's music, arts, and history during the EXPO, encouraging cultural exchange and international collaboration.

4. Sustainability and Green Technologies

Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a leader in renewable energy and sustainable development. The EXPO provides an ideal platform to highlight these efforts and establish the Kingdom as a global hub for green technologies.

Execution Steps

- **Sustainable EXPO Design:** Incorporate green building standards and renewable energy solutions into the design of the EXPO site. This includes solar panels, green rooftops, water recycling systems, and waste-to-energy technologies.
- **Focus on Green Technologies at the EXPO:** Ensure the EXPO's pavilions and exhibits prioritize sustainable innovations across industries, such as clean energy, water conservation, and circular economies.

- **Post-EXPO Green Legacy:** Develop a strategy for post-event utilization of the site and infrastructure for sustainable activities. The EXPO venue could become an innovation park focused on sustainable development, hosting startups, international conferences, and green business incubators.
- **Host International Green Partnerships:** Use the EXPO as a platform to bring together green technology innovators from around the world, showcasing Saudi Arabia's renewable energy projects (e.g., NEOM's solar farms, the Red Sea Project's sustainable tourism).

5. Education, Skills Development, and Innovation

EXPO can play a significant role in promoting skills development and education, ensuring that the next generation of Saudis is equipped for a diversified, knowledge-based economy. Collaborative programs between universities, research institutes, and businesses can ensure that EXPO delivers tangible results for the future workforce.

Execution Steps

- **International Academic Partnerships:** Create academic exchange programs and collaborations between Saudi universities and international institutions. Partner with leading universities to host conferences, lectures, and workshops during the EXPO, focusing on future industries like AI, robotics, and renewable energy.
- **Innovation Competitions:** Organize global innovation challenges at the EXPO for universities and startups to showcase their solutions to global challenges, offering funding and support for scalable projects.
- **Create Incubators and Innovation Hubs:** Set up incubators and research centers on the EXPO site or in surrounding areas. These hubs can focus on emerging technologies and sustainable innovations, offering mentorship, access to funding, and collaboration with international experts.

6. Comprehensive Collaboration Framework: Government and Non-Governmental Institutions

Governmental Coordination

The government should establish an EXPO Steering Committee, which includes representatives from relevant ministries, local governments, private sector partners, and international organizations. This committee would oversee the planning and implementation of EXPO-related initiatives, ensuring that objectives align with national priorities, especially Vision 2030.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Collaboration between government institutions and private sector companies is critical to the success of EXPO. Businesses can provide expertise, infrastructure development, and funding for projects, while government bodies provide policy support, regulation, and land allocation. Key sectors for PPPs include construction, hospitality, energy, technology, and tourism.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs, especially those focused on education, cultural exchange, environmental sustainability, and community development, can play a vital role in supporting EXPO activities. These organizations can help in organizing educational programs, promoting sustainable development, and ensuring the event reaches a diverse global audience.

Execution Steps

- **Establish an EXPO Task Force:** Create a cross-sector task force that includes government agencies, private companies, NGOs, and international bodies. This task force will work on logistics, marketing, content development, and social programs.
- **Collaborate with International Organizations:** Saudi Arabia can collaborate with international bodies like the UN, World Bank, and WTO to create a global platform for knowledge exchange on topics such as climate change, sustainable development, and future cities.

Table 3 provides a clear roadmap for execution, outlining responsible institutions and ensuring alignment with Vision 2030 goals.

Table 3: A Roadmap for the Strategic Program Execution

Objective	Execution Procedure	Responsible Institutions
1. Driving Economic Diversification and Innovation		
Sectoral Focus: Diversification Beyond Oil	Align EXPO themes with Vision 2030 sectors (e.g., clean energy, smart cities, tourism).	Ministry of Investment (MISA), Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA)
	Launch an international investment campaign for FDI attraction in tech, green energy, and entertainment.	SAGIA, Public Investment Fund (PIF)
	Partner with global corporations to establish innovation pavilions.	MISA, Private Sector (Tech, Energy, and Tourism Firms)

2. Infrastructure Development: Smart Cities and Sustainable Infrastructure		
EXPO Site Transformation	Develop a post-EXPO urban plan to repurpose the site as a smart city or business hub.	Saudi Vision 2030 Real Estate Development Committee, Public Investment Fund (PIF)
	Integrate smart technologies (e.g., AI, IoT, autonomous transport) into the site.	Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, Private Smart City Developers
	Expand transport infrastructure, including metro, high-speed rail, and EV charging stations.	Public Works Authority (MODON), Ministry of Transport
3. Tourism and Global Engagement		
Tourism Development Strategy	Launch a global tourism campaign showcasing Saudi heritage and modern developments.	Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), Ministry of Culture
	Enhance visitor experience by developing seamless transport, accommodations, and cultural events.	STA, Private Hospitality Sector (Hotels, Airlines)
	Organize cultural exchange programs during EXPO to promote Saudi arts and traditions.	Local NGOs, Ministry of Culture
4. Sustainability and Green Technologies		
Green Infrastructure & EXPO Site	Design EXPO facilities with renewable energy solutions, green building materials, and waste recycling.	Saudi Green Initiative, Ministry of Energy
	Establish pavilions showcasing global green technologies and sustainable solutions.	King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy (KACARE), Private Green Tech Firms
	Repurpose EXPO site as a green innovation park post-event.	PIF, Sustainability NGOs, Ministry of Investment
5. Education, Skills Development, and Innovation		
Knowledge & Innovation Platforms	Develop academic partnerships with global universities for research and skills exchange programs.	Saudi Universities, International Academic Partners (MIT, Stanford)
	Host innovation competitions for startups in AI, robotics, and renewable energy.	Ministry of Education, Private Sector Innovators
	Create incubators for post-EXPO knowledge transfer and research hubs.	PIF, Saudi Research & Development Centers
6. Comprehensive Collaboration Framework		
Governmental Coordination	Establish an EXPO Steering Committee to oversee planning and execution.	EXPO 2030 Organizing Committee, Key Government Ministries
Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	Engage private companies in co-developing infrastructure, tech solutions, and event execution.	Ministry of Economy, Saudi Business Council
NGO and International Collaboration	Partner with NGOs and international organizations to ensure knowledge exchange on sustainability and global trade.	UN, World Bank, WTO, Local NGOs

Hosting the World EXPO in Saudi Arabia presents a unique opportunity to drive economic diversification, build infrastructure, boost tourism, and promote sustainability. By implementing a comprehensive, multi-phase plan that leverages both governmental and non-governmental institutions, Saudi Arabia can maximize the benefits of EXPO, creating a lasting legacy that aligns with Vision 2030's goals for economic transformation, global engagement, and innovation. With strategic collaboration, infrastructure investment, and a focus on sustainability, the Kingdom can harness the power of the EXPO to transform itself into a global hub for business, tourism, and innovation.

6. Discussion

6.1. Case Studies: The Value of Key Lessons

The analysis of previous World EXPOs highlights their potential to act as powerful catalysts for economic transformation, global engagement, and urban development. However, the experiences of past host cities also reveal the risks of inadequate planning, short-term vision, and missed opportunities. The key lessons drawn from these case studies provide invaluable insights that have shaped the suggested strategic program for Saudi Arabia's hosting of EXPO 2030. By integrating these lessons, the proposed program ensures that EXPO 2030 delivers lasting economic benefits, aligns with Vision 2030, and establishes Saudi Arabia as a global leader in innovation, sustainability, and tourism.

Each case study analyzed in this research offers a unique perspective on the factors that determine the success or limitations of an EXPO. The transformation of Dubai's EXPO 2020 site into District 2020 illustrates the critical role of legacy planning in ensuring long-term infrastructure utilization. Similarly, Shanghai's EXPO 2010, which reinforced China's global position through strategic urban and economic development, demonstrates how an EXPO can accelerate national ambitions. On the other hand, cities such as Seville (1992) and Montreal (1967) struggled with financial deficits and underutilized infrastructure, serving as cautionary tales about the dangers of over-expenditure and lack of integration into long-term development plans.

These lessons emphasize that an EXPO must be more than a six-month event – it should be a vehicle for sustained economic growth, investment attraction, and global branding. Without a clear post-event strategy, host cities risk having expensive infrastructure with limited functionality. The insights gained from these case studies have directly informed the design of the suggested program for EXPO 2030, ensuring that every aspect of the event contributes to Saudi Arabia's long-term economic transformation.

6.2. An Assessment of the Proposed Program for Maximizing the Economic Benefits of Hosting EXPO in Saudi Arabia

The proposed program for hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia is a comprehensive and strategically aligned framework that focuses on leveraging the event to drive the Kingdom's long-term economic diversification, global engagement, and sustainability objectives. The program effectively incorporates key sectors such as technology, green energy, tourism, infrastructure, and education, all of which are aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Below is an assessment of the program's potential for success based on its components, execution steps, and broader implications for the country's development.

6.2.1. Economic Diversification and Innovation

The focus on economic diversification, particularly moving away from oil dependence, is one of the most critical components of the proposed plan. The emphasis on sectors like technology, tourism, green energy, and entertainment resonates strongly with the goals of Vision 2030. By positioning EXPO 2030 as a platform for global partnerships and innovation, Saudi Arabia can effectively showcase its evolving economic landscape. This will likely attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in non-oil industries, thereby stimulating economic growth beyond oil. The execution steps, such as establishing sectoral themes around sustainability and technology, align with global trends and present Saudi Arabia as a forward-thinking nation. Partnerships with multinational corporations will not only enhance the visibility of Saudi Arabia's emerging sectors but will also create a conducive environment for technology transfer and knowledge exchange.

The potential for success is likely to be high. The growing interest in emerging sectors like clean energy and technology, combined with Saudi Arabia's ambitious plans, makes this approach promising for both short-term visibility and long-term economic transformation.

6.2.2. Infrastructure Development: Smart Cities and Sustainable Infrastructure

The focus on smart cities and sustainable infrastructure is vital for ensuring that EXPO 2030 leaves a lasting legacy beyond the event itself. Drawing inspiration from Dubai's District 2020, repurposing the EXPO site for long-term use will maximize the return on investment and create a vibrant hub for businesses and innovation. This strategy helps mitigate concerns about the "white elephant" phenomenon, where EXPO sites become abandoned or underutilized after the event. Collaborating with international firms on infrastructure design and leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) are crucial for achieving sustainable, future-oriented urban development.

The potential for success is likely to be very high. Given Saudi Arabia's growing interest in smart city projects like NEOM and its capacity to attract investment in infrastructure, this approach is well-positioned to contribute to long-term economic growth and urban development.

6.2.3. Tourism and Global Engagement

Tourism is a key pillar of Saudi Arabia's diversification strategy, and the EXPO will provide a unique opportunity to showcase the Kingdom's rich cultural heritage and modern developments. The program's emphasis on a global tourism campaign and high-quality visitor experiences is aligned with Saudi Arabia's recent efforts to position itself as a tourism hub. Cultural exchange and the development of hospitality infrastructure are vital in enhancing the visitor experience, and by linking EXPO visitors to other tourist destinations within the Kingdom, Saudi Arabia can encourage longer stays and repeat visits.

The potential for success is likely to be high. Saudi Arabia has already made strides in tourism development with projects like NEOM and Qiddiya, and EXPO 2030 can accelerate this growth. Additionally, the global appeal of cultural heritage, alongside modern developments, is a strong selling point.

6.2.4. Sustainability and Green Technologies

Saudi Arabia's commitment to sustainability is central to its Vision 2030 goals, and the EXPO provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the country's green technologies and renewable energy projects. The focus on incorporating sustainable infrastructure into the EXPO's design, such as solar panels, green rooftops, and waste-to-energy technologies, will enhance the environmental credentials of the event. Moreover, hosting international green technology partnerships will help position Saudi Arabia as a global leader in renewable energy. The post-EXPO legacy plan to convert the site into an innovation park dedicated to sustainable development further strengthens the sustainability goals.

The potential for success is likely to be very high. With the Saudi Green Initiative already in motion, the EXPO will complement ongoing sustainability efforts and provide a platform for Saudi Arabia to assert itself as a key player in the global green economy.

6.2.5. Education, Skills Development, and Innovation

The emphasis on education and skills development is particularly crucial for Saudi Arabia's goal of fostering a knowledge-based economy. By fostering international academic collaborations and promoting innovation through global challenges, the EXPO will provide valuable opportunities for students, startups, and researchers. The establishment of innovation

hubs and incubators around the EXPO site will also create long-term value by nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators. This focus on skills and innovation aligns well with the Kingdom's need to build human capital in sectors like AI, robotics, and renewable energy.

The potential for success is likely to be high. Saudi Arabia's investments in education and research are growing, and the EXPO provides an excellent opportunity to build on these investments, ensuring the Kingdom's workforce is well-prepared for future industries.

6.2.6. Comprehensive Collaboration Framework: Government and Non-Governmental Institutions

The creation of an EXPO Steering Committee and the emphasis on cross-sector collaboration with government bodies, private companies, NGOs, and international organizations is a key strength of the proposed plan. Effective collaboration among these stakeholders will ensure that the program is well-coordinated and aligned with both national and international priorities. Furthermore, by engaging with international organizations such as the UN, World Bank, and WTO, Saudi Arabia can position the EXPO as a global platform for discussing pressing issues like climate change, sustainable development, and future cities.

The potential for success is likely to be very high. The emphasis on coordination and public-private partnerships will create a cohesive and unified approach, ensuring that EXPO 2030 is successful both as an event and as a catalyst for long-term development.

Overall, the proposed plan for maximizing the economic benefits of hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia has a high potential for success. The comprehensive, multi-phase approach, which incorporates economic diversification, infrastructure development, tourism, sustainability, education, and collaboration, aligns well with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 objectives. The key to success will be ensuring that the proposed initiatives are effectively implemented through strong coordination among government bodies, private sector partners, and international stakeholders.

Moreover, leveraging Saudi Arabia's unique geopolitical position, significant investments in infrastructure, and growing commitment to sustainability and technological innovation will ensure that the Kingdom can achieve both short-term benefits and long-term economic transformation. By focusing on creating lasting legacies through infrastructure, innovation, education, and green technologies, Saudi Arabia can maximize the impact of hosting EXPO 2030 and solidify its position as a global economic powerhouse.

The suggested program for EXPO 2030 is not only a blueprint for hosting a world-class event but also a strategic initiative designed to accelerate Saudi Arabia's economic transformation. By ensuring that EXPO 2030 aligns with Vision 2030, the program maximizes the event's potential to drive economic diversification, infrastructure development, foreign investment, and global engagement. The long-term success of EXPO 2030 will have a profound and lasting impact on the

Saudi economy, positioning the Kingdom as a key global player in innovation, sustainability, and tourism.

7. Conclusion

Hosting EXPO 2030 in Saudi Arabia presents an extraordinary opportunity to shape the Kingdom's future under Vision 2030. The experiences drawn from previous EXPO hostings offer invaluable insights for Saudi Arabia as it prepares to host EXPO 2030 in Riyadh. Each EXPO has demonstrated the transformative potential of hosting such a global event, showcasing the ability to drive economic growth, enhance global engagement, and accelerate infrastructure development. However, these events have also revealed several challenges, particularly concerning post-event utilization, financial sustainability, and the long-term impact of investments.

From the analysis of these case studies, several key lessons emerge that are critical for Saudi Arabia's strategy moving forward. The integration of multifunctional infrastructure that serves long-term purposes beyond the event, as seen in EXPO 2020 Dubai's District 2020, should be a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's planning. Furthermore, aligning the event with global trends in sustainability and technological innovation will not only enhance the country's image but also support its Vision 2030 objectives of economic diversification and global leadership in clean energy, technology, and smart cities.

Additionally, the importance of leveraging EXPO 2030 as a platform for cultural diplomacy, economic partnerships, and tourism development cannot be overstated. Saudi Arabia must ensure that the EXPO becomes a focal point for international collaboration, positioning itself as a leader in sustainable practices and innovation. Strategic financial planning and risk management, particularly in terms of ensuring post-event infrastructure utilization and social benefits, are essential to avoid the challenges faced by previous EXPO hosts.

The key takeaway for Saudi Arabia is the need for comprehensive planning that integrates long-term economic, social, and environmental considerations. By learning from past EXPO experiences and applying these lessons to EXPO 2030, Saudi Arabia can maximize the event's potential to drive national growth, enhance global competitiveness, and leave a lasting legacy of innovation, sustainability, and cultural exchange.

Based on the lessons learnt from the selected case studies, the proposed program for EXPO 2030 is designed to maximize economic, social, and environmental benefits for Saudi Arabia,

aligned with its Vision 2030 objectives. By focusing on economic diversification, infrastructure development, tourism, sustainability, education, and global engagement, the program is poised to support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objectives and facilitate the Kingdom's transition from an oil-dependent economy to a diversified, knowledge-based economy. The emphasis on cross-sector collaboration, long-term legacy planning, and global partnerships will ensure that the EXPO's impact extends far beyond the event itself, contributing to sustained growth and innovation in various sectors.

This plan offers Saudi Arabia an unprecedented opportunity to position itself as a global leader in emerging industries such as green technology, digital transformation, and sustainable urban development. By showcasing its progress and ambitions during the EXPO, the Kingdom can attract foreign investment, create new job opportunities, and foster international collaborations, all of which are critical to achieving long-term economic prosperity. Furthermore, the emphasis on education, innovation, and skills development ensures that the next generation of Saudis will be well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly evolving global economy.

The proposed program's success hinges on effective coordination between government bodies, the private sector, and international stakeholders. While the plan is robust and well-structured, future studies could explore the specific financial mechanisms and policies required to support the implementation of these initiatives, as well as evaluate the long-term social and economic impacts of EXPO 2030 on Saudi Arabia's workforce and global reputation.

The importance of this program lies in its comprehensive approach, focusing on infrastructure, global engagement, sustainability, and long-term economic diversification. By addressing both immediate and long-term needs, the program will ensure that EXPO 2030 leaves a lasting legacy of growth, innovation, and global influence. Further research could focus on assessing the success of similar initiatives in other host countries, providing additional insights into potential challenges and best practices for Saudi Arabia's unique context.

The proposed program has significant implications for Saudi Arabia's future development. If successfully implemented, it will not only enhance the Kingdom's global profile but also lay the foundation for sustainable economic growth, social development, and technological innovation. The EXPO will be a critical step in the Kingdom's transition to a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

However, further research is needed to explore the specific financial mechanisms and policies required to support the program's implementation. Additionally, future studies should focus on evaluating the long-term impacts of EXPO 2030 on Saudi Arabia's workforce, global reputation, and sustainability efforts. Research into public-private partnerships (PPPs),

stakeholder engagement strategies, and the role of digital technologies in enhancing visitor experience will also provide valuable insights for refining the program. Moreover, the long-term environmental impact of EXPO infrastructure should be a key area of study to ensure that the event's legacy is environmentally sustainable. Further research on the socio-cultural effects of EXPOs and how they foster international collaboration could also provide useful lessons for Saudi Arabia in shaping its global relationships post-event.

In conclusion, the lessons learned from previous EXPOs, coupled with the proposed program for EXPO 2030, offer Saudi Arabia a unique opportunity to accelerate its Vision 2030 objectives. By focusing on economic diversification, infrastructure development, sustainability, and global engagement, Saudi Arabia can leverage EXPO 2030 to not only showcase its transformation but also establish a lasting legacy of growth, innovation, and international collaboration. The importance of this strategic program cannot be overstated, as it provides a clear path to maximizing the long-term benefits of hosting the EXPO, securing Saudi Arabia's place as a global leader in sustainability, technology, and cultural exchange.

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المستخلص

تستكشف هذه الورقة البحثية الآثار الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والبيئية المحتملة لاستضافة معرض إكسبو 2030 في المملكة العربية السعودية، وتقدم برنامجاً شاملاً يهدف إلى تعظيم هذه الفوائد. يركز البرنامج على مواءمة أنشطة معرض إكسبو مع رؤية المملكة 2030، مع التأكيد على التنوع الاقتصادي، وتطوير البنية التحتية، والاستدامة، والسياحة، والتعليم، والانخراط العالمي. تشمل المنهجية تحليل دراسات حالة من دول سبق أن استضافت المعرض، بهدف استخلاص الدروس وأفضل الممارسات التي يمكن تطبيقها في السياق السعودي. كما يدعو البرنامج إلى تبني محاور قطاعية مثل التكنولوجيا، والاستدامة، والابتكار، وتعزيز الاستثمار والشراكات الدولية. ويحدد البرنامج كذلك استراتيجيات لاستغلال المعرض كمنصة لعرض التقنيات الخضراء في المملكة، والمدن الذكية، والإرث الثقافي، مع ضمان تحقيق فوائد طويلة الأمد من خلال تطوير البنية التحتية وتدريب الكوادر البشرية. ويؤكد البرنامج على أهمية التعاون بين الحكومة والقطاع الخاص والمنظمات الدولية من أجل خلق إرث دائم لهذا الحدث العالمي. وأخيراً، تسلط الورقة الضوء على أهمية الدراسات المستقبلية في تقييم الآثار الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لمعرض إكسبو 2030 على سوق العمل السعودي، والسمعة العالمية للمملكة، والتحول الاقتصادي طويل المدى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إكسبو 2030؛ المملكة العربية السعودية، رؤية 2030؛ التنوع الاقتصادي، تطوير البنية التحتية، الاستدامة؛ التقنيات الخضراء؛ السياحة؛ الانخراط العالمي؛ تنمية المهارات، الابتكار؛ الشراكات بين القطاعين العام والخاص.